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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0014
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//
RULGPUA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 000029

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WHA/EPSC
CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KPAO OPRC KMDR PREL

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; THWARTED COLOMBIAN HOSTAGE RESCUE
OPERATION; ARGENTINE FOREIGN POLICY; 01/08/08

11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's leading international opinion pieces are related to the thwarted Colombian hostage rescue operation; and the Argentine foreign policy.

12. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "Emmanuel and diplomatic caution"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (01/08) "The fiasco represented by the hostage rescue operation... will compel the Argentine authorities to revisit their diplomatic guidelines.

"... The operation was aborted due to the guerrillas' refusal to honor their promise, to which one should add the spectacular discovery of Emmanuel, who was not being held by the FARC but protected by the Colombian social welfare system.

"The FARC's attitude ridiculed Chavez and implied a rebuff to the guarantors who trusted their promises...."The first lesson from this incident is that Argentine diplomacy should be more careful in the uncertain arena of regional politics and avoid playing a leading role that could become counterproductive."

- "Some predictable banning"

Oscar Raúl Cardoso, leading "Clarín's" international analyst, writes (01/08) "Colombian President Alvaro Uribe Vélez decided to make public through his FM Fernando Araujo that he will not authorize any further 'humanitarian hostage rescue operation' from foreign governments just like the one that failed under the leadership of Venezuelan Hugo Chavez.

"The Colombian President made this decision on the alleged and already known ground that these kinds of initiatives only favor the FARC..."

"... Obviously enough, the military solution is the one that is gaining ground in trying to put an end to the problem posed by the Colombian insurgency, a policy that Uribe has tenaciously promoted during the five years of his administration. Venezuelan Chavez insists on recovering his initiative although his maneuvering margin is almost nil. And even a domestic negotiation (without the intervention of third countries) is now a remote possibility."

- "Burying hope"

Business-financial "El Cronista" (01/08) carries an opinion piece by Sergio Berensztein, political analyst, who opines "The first and most resounding obstacles met by the Cristina Kirchner

administration have been related to foreign policy, precisely the area in which the biggest expectations of positive changes vis-`-vis the administration of her husband had emerged. Between her surprising overreaction to the 'suitcase gate' and particularly the failure of the Nestor Kirchner-led 'humanitarian effort' in the Colombian jungle, the (brand-new?) administration seems to have buried every expectation of a full re-insertion of the country into the international community.

".... The important thing now is pointing out that Argentina is today even more isolated from the world than it used to be in the past - it is confronted with the only world superpower, ignored by the main democratic leaders of the world, and left outside the radar of the complex forces promoting development and progress. To make matters worse, no one in the Government dares mention the issue of the country's pending Paris Club debt, much less the IMF and holdouts.

"Foreign policies fiascos are not the only ones. Hope for a gradual reconstruction of INDEC also seems to have been thwarted."

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